(b) whether Governmnet have taken any steps to educate the public in the matter so as to make them aware of their rights and privileges;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken in this regard for safeguarding interests of the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISCTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) to (e) Continuous efforts are being made by the Government to make people aware of their rights as consumers and the forums available for redressal of their complaints against defective goods and deficient services. Awareness programmes through audio, video and print media have been undertaken and also proposed to be undertaken by the Government throughout the country for this purpose. Consumer awareness programmes are also undertaken by Voluntary Consumer Organizations (VCOs) for which financial assistance is available from the Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF). Assistance was also sanctioned from the CWF for conducting awareness camps under the Jagriti Shivir Yojana in the country.

Movement of Foodgrains

932. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to remove restrictions on movement of foodgrains in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether Government propose to wind-up functioning of the Food Corporation of India; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U. V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) to (c) In order to facilitate free trade and movement of

foodgrains, and to enable the farmers to get the best prices for their produce, achieve price stability and ensure availability of foodgrains in deficit areas, Government (Deptt. of Consumer Affairs) has issued a Central Order titled 'Removal of (Licensing requirements, Stock limits and Movement restrictions) on Specified Foodstuffs Order, 2002', under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 on 15.2.2002, according to which any dealer can freely buy, stock, sell, transport, distribute, dispose, acquire, use or consume any quantity of wheat, paddy/rice, coarse grains, sugar, edible oilseeds and edible oils and shall not require any license or permit therefor. The Order has come into force after 30 days from the date of its issue.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Principal Distribution Centres in Himachal Pradesh

933. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal for opening of new Principal Distribution Centres in far flung and snow bound areas of Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir.The request of the State Government of Himachal Pradesh has been received for opening of six new additional Principal Distribution Centres (PDCs) at the following places under the Hill Transport subsidy Scheme:—

(i) Bara Bengal in Distt. Kangra (ii) Shillaai in Distt. Sirmour (iii) Barot-Janjehlli in Distt. Mandi (iv) Pooh in Distt. Kannaur (v) Dodra Kawar-Chopal in Distt. Shimla and (vi) Kandhar (Mangal)- Nalagarh in Distt. Solan.

The Government has recently fixed the minimum criteria for